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By Staff Sgt. Karima Turner
134th Public Affairs Detachment

Alaska Army National Guard Soldiers return from Afghanistan

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind.—More than 100 Alaska Army National Guardsmen returned to the United States Nov. 8, following a year-long deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Soldiers of B Company, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 143rd Infantry Regiment arrived in Indianapolis and were greeted at the plane by U.S. Sen. Mark Begich, Lt. Gov. Mead Treadwell, Maj. Gen. Thomas H. Katkus, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, and several other Alaska National Guard senior leaders.

In Afghanistan, the Alaska Guardsmen provided security forces for provincial reconstruction teams operating in dangerous areas across the country to rebuild infrastructure, assist with agriculture, build wells and provide healthcare.

"I'm very proud of our Alaska National Guardsmen, and I'm honored to welcome them home to the United States," Treadwell said. "These brave Soldiers courageously performed security forces missions in extremely dangerous areas throughout Afghanistan to assist the provincial reconstruction teams that are rebuilding the country. They are true American heroes, and I, along with all Alaskans, thank them for their exemplary service."

The returning Alaska Army National Guard Soldiers hail from Anchorage, Bethel, Chevak, Delta Junction, Dillingham, Eagle River, Ekwok, Emmonak, Fairbanks, Fort Greely, Hooper Bay, Houston, Juneau, Kipnuk, Kodiak, Kongiganak, Kwethluk, Little Diomed, Marshal, Nikkiski, Nome, North Pole, Palmer, Port Graham, Quinaag, Scammon Bay, Shishmaref, Sitka, Tuluksa, Upper Kalskag, Valdez, Wasilla and Wrangell.

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Photo Cutlines:

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Maj. Gen. Thomas H. Katkus, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, welcomes home Spc. Darshan Dogra along with 107 other Alaska Army National Guard Soldiers from B Company, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 143rd Infantry Regiment after a year-long tour in Afghanistan. The Soldiers were deployed last year on a security forces mission in support of the provincial reconstruction teams who are helping to rebuild Afghanistan. The Soldiers landed in Indianapolis Nov. 8 to begin their demobilization training and are scheduled to be back in Alaska no later than the end of the month. Photo: Staff Sgt. Karima Turner, 134th Public Affairs Detachment

121108-A-MG376-001

Lt. Gov. Mead Treadwell, State of Alaska, welcomes home Staff Sgt. Caleb Funk of Bethel, along with 107 other Alaska Army National Guard Soldiers from B Company, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 143rd Infantry Regiment after a year-long tour in Afghanistan. The Soldiers were deployed last year on a security forces mission in support of the provincial reconstruction teams who are helping to rebuild Afghanistan. The Soldiers landed in Indianapolis Nov. 8 to begin their demobilization training and are scheduled to be back in Alaska no later than the end of the month. Photo: Staff Sgt. Karima Turner, 134th Public Affairs Detachment

121108-A-MG376-037

U.S. Sen. Mark Begich welcomes home Sgt. David Tunutomoak of Scammon Bay, along with 107 other Alaska Army National Guard Soldiers from B Company, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 143rd Infantry Regiment after a year-long tour in Afghanistan. The Soldiers were deployed last year on a security forces mission in support of the provincial reconstruction teams who are helping to rebuild Afghanistan. The Soldiers landed in Indianapolis Nov. 8 to begin their demobilization training and are scheduled to be back in Alaska no later than the end of the month. Photo: Staff Sgt. Karima Turner, 134th Public Affairs Detachment